The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter contains a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

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AGITATE! EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

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"WE WILL WIN WITHOUT COOLIES"

By PRESIDENT GOMPERS, IN AMERICAN FEDERATIONIST.

Shortly after war was declared by the United States against the imperial German government, war conditions were made the basis for an agitation to suspend legislation limiting and regulating immigration into this country. As a result of conditions prevailing during the war, immigration into the United States had fallen from 1,218,480 in the year ending June 30, 1914, to 295,403, in 1917, making a decrease of 923,077.

As a result of tremendous immigration into this country, which was in a large measure induced by steamship companies and by corporations who wished to profit from foreign cheap labor, there existed in practically all sections an over-supply of workers. A report published in Monthly Review by the bureau of labor statistics of the department of labor, October, 1915, shows that there was an average of 2,177,000 persons idle, taking averages during 12 months in the year in normal times. The months in which the European war was in progress had largely reduced immigration, but has not, as yet, taken up the slack. However, the employers of this country have never given any thought how to make most efficient use of workers or to plan for continuous employment of those on their pay roll or the "army of unemployed." They had always trusted to chance that there would be enough seeking jobs whenever there was occasion for employing additional workers. They had never organized their work to conform to the needs and supply of workers. They had always expected workers to conform to the needs and interests of employers. Labor had been considered as the unimportant part of production, to be either hired or fired in processes of production.

Employers had no conception of adjusting the economies of their organization to the new situation which made workers more valuable and less readily available. If three men were not waiting for one job, they thought there was a shortage. The only remedy that occurred to them was to open up the floodgates of immigration. They clamored for the repeal of this "protective" legislation. However, the department of labor suspended the immigration law to permit the entrance of Mexican workers, and then an assault was made upon the Chinese exclusion act.

Steamship companies have offered to bring in thousands of Chinese coolies. This movement now finds a congressional father in Senator Gallinger of New Hampshire, who introduced in the senate a resolution to investigate the advisability of repealing or suspending the Chinese exclusion act. The advocates of this course are treating the whole question as though it were a matter of expediency only. They ignore the fundamental principles upon which immigration legislation is based. These laws are the result of considered judgments and careful investigation of conditions and tendencies covering a period of several decades.

World experience has demonstrated that the white race can not assimilate races of other colors. The other alternative, amalgamation, has results that are repugnant to Americans. We already have one race problem still unsettled.

There threatened another more serious problem through coolie immigration. European immigrants sooner or later become cooperators with America's workers, but Chinese workers provoke a conflict between white and yellow standards of life and work in which the coolies supplant and drive out the white workers. The result of the proposed policy would be, therefore, the Chinese colonies and Chinese industries which spring up in this country. To prevent this disaster the Chinese exclusion act was adopted with which is associated the gentleman's agreement which also restricts Japanese workers. The same conditions that made advisable the adoption of this legislation make inadvisable its repeal.

With one urgent and unsolved race problem on our hands we can not afford to risk national existence by inviting another. In this war for freedom we can not afford to use methods that would deprive our workers of those things that give life, hope and opportunity. Americans must deal with America's problems. Either they will demonstrate to cope with the situation for moral and mental stamina, or else they will confess inability to defend the cause of democracy and freedom. The problems of the war demand brains and efficiency, not stupidity and shirking.

Unite to win the war!

STEEL TRUST HEAD FAVORS ORIENTALS

Chicago, Jan. 12.—The beacon light of American democracy can be intensified with the aid of Orientals in American industry, in the American army and in the American navy, according to Elbert H. Gary, head of the United States steel corporation (the trust). He also believes in aiding working men in every possible way—except permitting them to develop independence and join labor unions.

Judge Gary expressed these thoughts in an address to business men, who were urged to demand the importation of Orientals.

"We can get them if we are so disposed," was the significant statement by the trust head.

"Under proper conditions and reasonable restrictions," he said, "draw from the islands of the sea and from Oriental countries enough men, including soldiers and sailors, to meet every emergency. There would be no difficulty in obtaining, within a short period, large numbers of strong, healthy, intelligent, loyal men for civil and even military duty, and the number could be increased from time to time as required."

Judge Gary still advocates the theory that workers should bargain individually with the mighty organization that he represents, for he says:

"All men of all grades, rank, and nationality should be permitted to work when and where they please and on terms that they agree to."

The speaker assured his hearers that working men "should be paid good wages, taking into account the service rendered and all conditions which reasonably apply"—it being understood, of course, that the steel trust would be the sole judge of such conditions.

TELEPHONE GIRLS WIN.

Boston, Jan. 12.—Organized telephone girls have raised wages $1 to $2 a week. About 3,000 girls are affected. Their first request for increases was rejected, but after they favored a strike by a vote of 20 to one, the company accepted mediation.

Fort Smith, Ark., Jan. 12.—The telephone strike in this city, which started last September when the company opposed unionism among its operators, has been satisfactorily adjusted, thanks to the sticktoitiveness of the girls. Wages and working conditions will be arbitrated.

San Francisco, Jan. 12.—In a statement signed by the local Telephone Operators' union and Electrical Workers' union No. 92 organized labor is asked to use its influence to build up the former union.

"We have just concluded an agreement, though the president's mediation commission, with the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph company, which agrees that no union employe shall be discharged or discriminated against," it is stated.

Telephone operators are organized in Aberdeen, Tacoma, Seattle, Olympia, North Yakima, Spokane, Portland, Fresno, Los Angeles, Bakersfield and Santa Rosa, and have been successful in getting increases granted in July, ranging from 10 to 30 cents a day for all operators; in August, time and one-half for Sundays and holidays; another dollar a week in October, and the last award by the president's mediation commission ranging from 50 cents to $1.40 a week.

BACK TO SQUAW PERIOD.

Detroit, Mich., Jan. 12.—Writing in the Motorman and Conductor, a union street car man has this to say of the plan to put women on street cars:

"Women are to be the mothers of future America, and our experience is that this class of work is in no way fitted for them. It has been the ambition of the sons of America to elevate American womanhood to the highest type of her sex. Certain profiteers, we regret to say, are not moving along these days in line with that American principle. On the other hand, they are endeavoring to convert our womanhood into food for greed. If there is a class of traitors who should be shot at sunrise it is that class who would commercialize our wives and daughters to make beasts of burden of them."

PREDICT U. S. MINES.

Indianapolis, Jan. 12.—In urging the convention of the United Mine Workers to realize that "the old order of things will be changed," the United Mine Workers' Journal says:

"On April 1 there is every possibility and, in fact, strong possibility, that the United States government will take over the coal output of the nation under a pooling arrangement and redistribute it as jobber, wholesaler and retailer at such margins of profit as the investigations of the fuel administration deem sufficient to repay the expense of this governmental exercise. This control may extent to actual operation of the mines."

DRAFT LAW UPHELD.

Washington, Jan. 12.—The United States supreme court has upheld the military conscription law. In a unanimous decision the court ruled that most of the claims against the law were imaginary rather than real, and that the power given congress to declare war includes power to compel citizens to render military service both at home and abroad.

WOMEN WORK TOO LONG.

Tacoma, Wash., Jan. 12.—State Labor Commissioner Younger is investigating reports that the women's eight-hour law is being evaded in this city. It is claimed that women employed in the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul railroad shops are working longer than eight hours a day.

MOLDERS RAISE WAGES.

Chattanooga, Tenn., Jan. 12.—The Mascot Stove Manufacturing company has raised wages of its organized iron molders 25 per cent. This concern refuses to bother with so-called "welfare" schemes but believes in paying a living wage and permitting its employes to handle their own affairs.

SHOP MEN FEDERATE.

Jacksonville, Fla., Jan. 12. — Shop men employed by the Florida East Coast railroad have formed a system federation, affiliated with the A. F. of L. railway employes' department. The new movement includes machinists, boiler makers, blacksmiths and car men.

CITY EMPLOYES GAIN.

Duluth, Minn., Jan 12.—City officials have raised wages of common laborers from 37 to 40 cents an hour, and skilled laborers from 30 to 42 cents an hour.

POST OFFICE POLICIES ARE NOT PEOPLE'S WILL

Kansas City, Mo., Jan. 12.—Postal employes cannot agree with Postmaster General Burleson's statement in his annual report that the policies of the department are merely an expression of the will of the people, says the Railway Post Office, official magazine of the Railway Mail association.

"Time after time," says this paper, "congress has attempted remedial legislation for the purpose of relieving conditions in the service called to its attention through the officers of their organizations, and time after time 'interpretations' and rulings have defeated the purpose of congress and denied the employes the relief sought. Every branch of the service has its special grievances in regard to this practice, and all of them have several in common. In the railway mail service, congress enacted legislation for the purpose of establishing a regular salary for the long suffering substitutes, and another law for the purpose of preventing a salary reduction of the clerks, affected by the re-organization of the railway mail service. The plain will of congress in both of these matters has been defeated, and the clerks deprived of the benefits intended, through the practices and 'interpretations' of the post office department. The postal employes are perfectly willing to accept the will of the people, as expressed by congress, and one of the most important things which they seek is a method to make this will effective—a civil service court of appeals."

"TRENCH LIFE" IN AMERICA.

Fairmont, W. Va., Jan. 12.—An explosion at the Monongahela Powder company's plant caused the death of three employes and the serious injury of another.

Port Arthur, Tex., Jan. 12.—Gus Engstrom was instantly killed while unloading a ship. A hook on a wire cable caught in one of his pockets and he was lifted 50 feet in the air when the pocket broke. The worker fell, face foremost, into the hold of the vessel.

Acme, Ky., Jan. 12.—Six miners were fatally injured by a dust explosion in the Acme By-Product Coal company's mine at this place.

Pittston, Pa., Jan. 12.—Four men lost their lives because of a cave-in at one of the mines of the Pennsylvania Coal company.

Tacoma, Wash., Jan. 12.—Patrick Joyce, a railroad signal watchman, was instantly killed by a box hurled from a freight auto.

Grays Harbor, Wash., Jan. 12.—C. F. Scott and Frank Pepau, riggers employed in a local ship yard, were almost instantly killed when they fell 40 feet from a derrick arm on which they were working.

ONE R. R. SYSTEM POSSIBLE.

Washington, Jan. 12.—In urging congress to adopt legislation that will guarantee to railroad stockholders a yearly dividend equal to the average of the last three years, President Wilson said:

"It had become unmistakably plain that only under government administration can the entire equipment of the several systems of transportation be fully and unreservedly thrown into a common service without injurious discrimination against particular properties. Only under government administration can an absolutely unrestricted and unembarrassed common use be made of all tracks, terminals, terminal facilities and equipment of every kind. Only under that authority can new terminals be constructed and developed without regard to the requirements or limitations of particular roads.

"But under government administration all these things will be possible—not instantly, but as fast as practical difficulties, which can not be merely conjured away, give way before the new management."

CIGAR MAKERS AT WORK.

San Juan, Porto Rico, Jan. 12.—Fifteen thousand cigar makers and tobacco workers have returned to work in the 19 factories of the Porto Rican-American Tobacco company. This ends the longest and most general cigar strike the island has ever had. The agreement is for one year with the option of extending it to three years. Wages for cigar makers are increased $1.50 a week and approximately 50 per cent for strippers. The strike, which was indorsed by a referendum of organized cigar makers in the United States, has been on since last September. About one-half of the strikers are affiliated with the Cigar Makers' International union.

LOW WAGE IN LIBRARIES.

New York, Jan. 12.—At a meeting of the central federated union, library employes told of wage conditions existing in the municipal libraries. A cheap labor standard prevails, substitutes receiving $40 a month and some times wait two or three years for advancement. Some of the women are afraid to join the union, because of the trustees' opposition to organized labor.

PUSH "DAYLIGHT SAVING."

Washington, Jan. 12.—The daylight saving bill, which passed the senate last June, will be considered by the house soon after the emergency railroad and other war legislation recommended by the president is out of the way. The bill provides for the advancing of the clocks of the nation one hour from the last Sunday in April to the last Sunday in September.

TO VOTE ON DEATH BENEFITS.

Cincinnati, Jan. 12.—The executive board of the Brewery and Soft Drink Workers' International union has submitted a death benefit proposal to the referendum. The principal was indorsed by the last convention. The plan provides for a $75 benefit after membership of six months; $100 at one year, and $150 after two years.

PRESSMEN RAISE WAGES.

New Orleans, Jan. 12. — Printing Pressmen's union No. 26 has established a new wage scale, which provides for these rates: Foremen, [illegible]; cylinder pressmen, $21; job pressmen, [illegible]; cylinder press feeders, $16.50 a week.

TYPEWRITER GIRLS STRIKE.

Hartford, Conn., Jan. 12.—Nearly [illegible] girl employes of the Royal Typewriter company suspended work when they were refused a wage increase of 25 cents a day. Later the girls organized.

CANAL ZONE HEALTHY FOR PICKED WORKERS

Balboa, Panama, Jan. 12.—The metal trades council has issued a statement relative to working conditions on the canal zone. Regarding free medical treatment and the low mortality here, the unionists say:

"When it is considered that all Panama canal employes are picked men physically, as well as of high average in education, experience and training, it will be apparent that for such a class of men living in the United States medical care would be a comparatively negligible item in the cost of living. Hospital treatment is not free for families of employes. The greater susceptibility to ills and diseases here as compared with a temperate climate makes this an important consideration. Many recent instances could be cited of wives and children of employes suffering from illness attributed to the effects of this climate, necessitating the expense of hospital treatment here, and change of climate, entailing the expense of travel to the United States and—the expense of maintaining members of the family under conditions of separation. The reduced and comparatively low death rate here has been cited to indicate the favorable health conditions brought about on the isthmus. It should not be forgotten that, as before stated, the employes of the canal are men of select physical condition in the prime of life, that all cases of pulmonary tuberculosis, and like serious maladies, are deported from the isthmus; that destitute and physically incapacitated persons in the canal zone are liberally assisted by the canal zone branch of the Red Cross, supported by contributions from employes; so that every case approaching danger of death is removed from the isthmus. This leaves the death rate and destitution here to show up in a light hardly fair to employes when used to argue that comparative conditions are better than is borne out by any but a superficial knowledge of the facts."

OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES.

San Francisco, Jan. 12.—During the year 1916 there were reported to the industrial accident commission 318 cases of occupational diseases in California. In this list is included 43 cases of lead poisoning. The commission states that special attention has been given to lead poisoning which has long been recognized as a clearly defined occupational disease. Lead gains admission to the body through the skin by inhalation of fumes and dust, and through the mouth. A daily portion half the size of a grain of mustard is sufficient to develop a case of lead poisoning. The commission recommends cleanliness as perhaps the most potent preventative measure. It is a good plan, it is stated, in many establishments where workers are exposed to lead fumes and dust, to require a complete change into fresher garments at frequent intervals. Shower baths are often maintained at so-called change houses. Workmen are likewise required to thoroughly wash the hands and face immediately before partaking of food.

WANT BETTER LAWS.

Newark, N. J., Jan. 12.—At a meeting of officers of the state federation of labor and its affiliates it was agreed that the general assembly be asked to pass several laws beneficial to the workers. Amendments to the compensation law, which would increase benefits from 50 to 66 2-3 per cent and increase the maximum of $10 to $12 a week, and the minimum of $5 to $6 a week, were favored.

Continuation schools for minors between the ages of 14 and 18 years was favored, as was the licensing of all private employment bureaus.

GIVING CREDIT WHERE DUE.

San Francisco, Jan. 12.—Editor Tveitmoe of Organized Labor has this to say of Frederick J. Koster, one of this city's leading anti-unionists and "law-and-orderite:"

"San Francisco can count several crafts which are 100 per cent organized, among them the coopers, employed by Frederick J. Koster. To his credit be it said that he runs a thorough union shop and pays good wages to first-class union men."

OPPOSE STATE COSSACKS.

Newark, N. J., Jan. 12.—Henry F. Hilfers, secretary of the New Jersey state federation of labor, notifies the political powers-that-be that organized labor is watching the plan to foist a state constabulary on this state at this session of the general assembly.

WILL ENFORCE HEALTH LAW.

Atlanta, Ga., Jan. 12.—After remaining a dead letter for 15 years Georgia's health law, which requires that physicians report communicable diseases, will be strictly enforced, according to a statement issued by the state board of health.

TRIMMERS JOIN HATTERS.

Danbury, Conn., Jan. 12.—The Hat Trimmers' union has voted to amalgamate with the United Hatters. The latter organization favored unity at its last convention.

RAILROAD KEY MEN MAKE NOTABLE GAINS

St. Louis, Mo., Jan. 12.—In summarizing last year's gains by the Order of Railroad Telegraphers, President Perham sends this cheering word to these unionists:

"Contrary to expectations, all records were excelled during the year of 1917. It was supposed that the war would have an adverse influence and that the pace we have kept up for many years past would be slackened. But such, happily, was not the case. The fighting spirit, now in evidence all over the world, reached into the towers, offices, stations and places where our members are employed, and there appears a general resistance to the unjust conditions that have prevailed there for many years past.

"The increases in wages in other lines of employment, the constantly increasing cost of living necessities, the rise in rents, and many other influences made it well nigh impossible to proceed along the old lines, and those who had found it convenient to work all day and every day for a bare subsistence were at last stirred into resistance. The result is that 129 new and revised schedules have been accomplished during the year, with only one lockout or strike to mar the record.

"Each and every one of the schedule negotiations carried increases in the wage rate running from 7 to 32 per cent. But calculating by average does not help the situation—it is a play in mathematics that does not relieve want."

During the past year, continues President Perham, the movement for pay for Sunday work has gained impetus, and to date 28 railroad systems pay for this work, in some cases the rates being double.

WORKERS MUST PAY COST.

Chicago, Jan. 12.—The Union Leader, official magazine of Chicago's organized street car men, dissects the glowing report of the Third Avenue Railway (New York) Employes' association.

"The above is a company-controlled institution," says the Union Leader. "The employes are denied the right to become members of a union. Half the benefit fund is taken directly from the pay envelopes and the other half—the so-called company share—is taken from the employes indirectly in reduced wages and poor working conditions. And the workers have nothing to say about it. The whole institution is a clearing house for the company in patching up crippled employes, victims of onerous conditions and autocratic management, at the employes' expense. Perhaps the club rooms and reading rooms may soothe the injured workers' feelings, but they can't cash these privileges at the grocery market."

IS CHINA PROSPEROUS?

San Francisco, Jan. 12.—If cheap labor is profitable to a nation why is not China the most prosperous country in the world? asks Editor Mullen of the Labor Clarion.

"Cheap labor is doubtless a good thing for a few people," he says. "It enables them to get rich at the expense of the masses. But cheap labor is a very bad thing for the nation, the state or the community that tolerates it. China has cheap labor, and if cheap labor were a good thing China would be one of the leading nations of the world. There are men in California endeavoring, for selfish reasons, to convince our people that China is really great."

REFUSE TO BE COERCED.

Detroit, Mich., Jan. 12.—Organized pattern makers employed by the Aluminum Castings company have suspended work rather than sign a contract which pledges them not to join a labor union. The contract provides that "the employe, in consideration of the opportunity afforded him by such employment, shall not directly or indirectly aid unionism, or promote, aid or participate, either directly or indirectly, in any strike against the company."

URGE CHILD CONSERVATION.

Washington, Jan. 12.—The increasing necessity for maintaining standards of child welfare during war time, is urged by the federal children's bureau. It is stated that foreign countries, after permitting special exemptions from child labor standards "have almost with one accord regretted them as both injurious to the children and inefficient as regards industrial results. The immediate penalty has been a swelling stream of child offenders pouring through the courts."

SHIP YARD RAISES WAGES.

Wilmington, Del., Jan. 12.—The Pusey and Jones company, ship builders, has adopted a new wage schedule which will approximate government navy yard rates.

WOMEN SUFFRAGE FAVORED.

Annapolis, Md., Jan. 12.—Unrestricted suffrage for the women of Maryland is recommended by Governor Harrington in his message to the general assembly.

ENGINEERS WANT MORE.

Toronto, Canada, Jan. 12.—Hoisting and Portable Engineers' union No. 385 asks that rates be increased from 55 to 60 cents an hour.

ENGLAND'S WORKERS HAVE MORE FREEDOM

Washington, Jan. 12.—While certain influences in this country are demanding that labor be conscripted, England has abolished an element of force in the treatment of munitions workers.

Under a law passed in 1915 a munitions employe was not free to change his employment at will, and an employer was liable to heavy penalties if he engaged a workman, who within six weeks had been engaged on munitions work, without seeing a certificate from his former employer or from a munitions tribunal to the effect that the workman was free to accept other employment.

The government has abolished this practice and now a munitions worker is free to leave his present employment for other war work on giving a week's notice or longer notice, if same is required in his contract.

As a safeguard against excessive migration of labor, which might imperil munitions production, the war munitions volunteer scheme is extended as follows:

Volunteers, when assigned, will be entitled to subsistence allowance. Married men and unmarried men, whose homes are mainly dependent on them, will receive an allowance of 2s. 6d (60.8 cents) a day, and unmarried men, whose homes are partially dependent on them, will receive an allowance of 1s. 6d. (36.5 cents) a day.

These workers are entitled to free railway passes to and from their homes on general holidays or generally observed trade holidays. Passes are also given volunteers employed away from home who have no dependents and therefore no claim to subsistence allowance.

OSLER THEORY EXPLODED.

Chicago, Jan. 12.—Despite Dr. Osler's theory, men past middle age have demonstrated that they have not finished their usefulness, according to the first annual report of the employment bureau of the Employers' association.

During 1917, the first year of its existence, this bureau procured positions for 9,190 men over 45. The aggregate salaries paid to the men during the year amounted to more than $2,000,000.

The bureau is visited daily by more than 1,000 men above middle age who are in search of employment. Ninety per cent of the men sent out to fill positions during the last month have been employed at salaries ranging from $45 to $350 a month, the report says.

TEXAS FARMERS TO MEET.

Fort Worth, Tex., Jan. 12.—The Farmers' Educational and Co-operative union will hold a special convention in this city beginning January 22. The call provides for the consideration of the following questions:

"The distressing condition of the farming population in the one hundred drouth stricken counties of Texas, and consideration of measures for their relief; to increase the acreage to be planted in food and feed stuffs; the consideration of plans for financing and marketing our products for the ensuing year, and dissemination of information concerning emergency measures of the government, and their future effect on the farming industry."

MINERS NOT SLACKERS.

Hazelton, Pa., Jan. 12.—Thomas Kennedy, president of district No. 7, United Mine Workers, defends organized miners against charges that they are failing to do their part in the war. He shows that with a greatly decreased number of employes, miners in the anthracite region have produced 15,000,000 more tons of coal in the last year than formerly and this with an eight-hour day in effect instead of nine.

DEFENDS 8-HOUR DAY.

Tacoma, Wash., Jan. 12.—Secretary Jones, of the Timber Workers' union, says that one-half of the mills in this district are operating on the eight-hour system. This condition, the trade unionist declares, answers the claim of long-hour employers that they cannot compete with the 10 and 11-hour workday of southern pine mills.

SUFFRAGE WON BY 102,344.

Albany, N. Y. Jan. 12.—The official plurality in favor of the suffrage amendment at the election last November was 102,344, according to the state board of canvassers. The total vote, including soldiers' and sailors' ballots, was: For, 703,129; against, 600,776. The 1916 vote on this question was: For, 553,348; against, 7[illegible].

METAL POLISHERS WIN.

Newark, N. J., Jan. 12.—Metal Polishers' union No. 44 has adjusted differences with the Edison Phonograph company which locked out 108 polishers last year when they refused to work on Washington's birthday.

PAPER MILL STRIKE ENDS.

Orange, Tex., Jan. 12.—A three months' strike against the Yellow Pine Paper Mills company has been settled through mediation. These employes have been assured improved working conditions.

ANTI-CONSPIRACY LAW NOT LEGAL, SAYS COURT

Olympia, Wash., Jan. 12.—The state supreme court has ruled that the Portland anti-conspiracy ordinance is unconstitutional.

This ordinance, initiated by the Portland Employes' association, was adopted by a referendum vote last June. While the act is popularly known as the anti-picketing law, in effect it would outlaw every attempt of the workers to improve their condition.

In setting aside this ordinance, the court said:

"An agreement not to have dealings with a person is involved in a combination of working men, acting in concert, to quit their employment, and such action constitutes a strike. That such is the interpretation placed upon the language of the act by the defendant city, is manifest upon reading the charging part of the complaint in this case. The question is: Can a municipality, in the exercise of its police power, enact legislation declaring the act of striking to be criminal?

"It will not be disputed that every workman has an absolute right, in absence of a contract, to quit his employment when he pleases, and that the employer has the reciprocal right to discharge a workman in like manner. The fact that a number of workmen exercise this right in common cannot, we think, make the act criminal.

"The act of quitting employment in a body cannot, in itself, involve any question of public peace, health, or safety, unless it be complicated with some other problems as in time of war, and in such emergency the problem is shifted to the state or to the federal government. In this particular, then, the ordinance is unreasonable and void as against public policy, as disclosed in legislation and decisions of both state and federal courts."

PROTEST 8-HOUR ORDER.

Houston, Tex., Jan. 12.—Over 200 oil operators have protested against the eight-hour order of Federal Mediator Reed, who is charged with exceeding his authority. The employers insist that questions of employment are matters of contract, the freedom and sacredness of which cannot be interfered with.

Mediator Reed is a member of the president's mediation commission and was assigned to settle an eight-hour strike of several thousand oil workers. The operators accepted mediation but the decision has angered them. In answer to the claim that the California oil industry is on an eight-hour basis, they reply that this is not applicable to Texas, because the nation is now at war.

The Standard Oil company of California recently reported that it has had a record production since the eight-hour day was established by it a year ago.

EMPLOYER FINED $500.

New York, Jan. 12.—The conference committee of organized fur workers and employers have fined the firm of Weckstein & Sons $500 for persistent violations of the agreement between the two organizations.

The chairman of the conference committee, Dr. Magnes, who is also the employers' representative, agreed that drastic action must be taken to check these violations. Later the conference committee will decide to what purpose the $500 will be devoted.

UNION TOBACCO FUND.

Washington, Jan. 12.—Secretary Morrison of the A. F. of L. will receive contributions from trade unionists and sympathizers for the union-tobacco fund, which is intended to buy union label tobacco for soldiers and sailors, who insisted, as civilians, on union-labeled products. This fund was indorsed by the Buffalo convention of the A. F. of L. and contributions can be made either to Secretary Morrison or to officers of the Tobacco Workers' International union, Iroquois Life building, Louisville, Ky.

TRUCKS DO R. R. WORK.

Washington, Jan. 12.—The war department announces the successful completion of the trip from Detroit to the Atlantic seaboard of the first United States motor truck train. Arrangements have been made to continue these trains every day for six weeks. Each truck brought two tons of supplies and saved its own railroad haulage. This plan may be enlarged.

OPPOSE NINE-HOUR DAY.

Hazelton, Pa., Jan. 12.—Many operators have joined with their organized mine workers in opposing the reinstatement of the nine-hour day instead of eight hours. Both employers and employed say the mines are now not being worked full eight hours, owing to lack of cars and other supplies.

STATE UNIONISTS TO MEET.

San Antonio, Tex., Jan. 12.—The annual convention of the Texas state federation of labor will be held in this city beginning March 18.

GARMENT WORKERS GAIN.

Racine, Wis., Jan. 12.—The Hilker-Weicher Manufacturing company has raised wages 10 per cent.

STATE BOARD FAVORS JOINT BARGAINING

Boston, Jan. 12.—Joint bargaining minimizes friction and stabilizes industry, says the Massachusetts bureau of statistics in its latest report on "Collective Agreements Between Employers and Labor Organizations in Massachusetts."

"It is an established fact," says the bureau, "that this practice of settling industrial controversies which inevitably arise has proved mutually advantageous to both parties concerned, and that by promoting, in a very large number of cases, the principles of conciliation and arbitration has contributed greatly toward industrial harmony. While the establishment in all trades of a system of collective agreements between employers and employes would not wholly solve the labor problems of the present day, many of which are due rather to a general spirit of 'industrial unrest' than to any specific cause, nevertheless the general adoption of such system would undoubtedly result in greatly minimizing friction and in rendering more stable and calculable the conditions under which industry is carried on.

"The industrial agreement, in its most serviceable form, tends to establish a recognized medium through which the employer and his workmen may be brought into closer contact. Whenever joint committees, consisting of representatives of employers and employes, meet to consider working conditions, occasion is provided for discussion of every matter of significance and such discussion naturally results in bringing to light a fund of valuable suggestions and tends to promote a better spirit of co-operation."

LOSS FROM SICKNESS.

New York, Jan. 12.—A health census of Kansas City, Mo., conducted by the Metropolitan Life Insurance company, shows that there may be expected among white males in Kansas City, 15 years of age and over, an average working time loss of close to seven days annually on account of disabling sickness.

"These findings," it is stated, "agree so closely with the others developed by our sickness surveys in representative cities of the United States, that we must assume they represent fairly well the true average loss from disabling sickness among wage earners in Kansas City. It may be stated, however, for this city, as well as for the other cities studied, that a considerable number of the sickness recorded, is preventable and subject therefore to control and reduction."

In a health census by the same company of that portion of New York City known as "Chelsea," with 180,000 population, it is estimated that there are over 2,700 cases of serious sickness all the time. A good proportion of this sickness, it is stated, can be prevented. It was found that 25 per cent of the families live in three-room apartments and 38 per cent in four-room apartments. In other words, close to 80 per cent of the families live in apartments of from three to five rooms.

WANT "PRACTICAL" MEN.

Boston, Jan. 12.—Governor McCall's appointment of Prof. William Z. Ripley as a member of the state minimum wage commission is distasteful to some employers. The professor is denounced as a "theorist," and his opponents say that "the predominance of theorists on the commission has made it a positive menace to Massachusetts manufacturers."

It seems that Prof. Ripley has peculiar notions about every worker being entitled to a living wage, and it is claimed he has even gone so far as to hold that a business that cannot afford to pay a living wage should not be permitted to exist.

In registering their protest against the appointment employers asked Prof. Ripley whether he believed that "no wage is better than a low wage" for workers incapable of earning the established minimum. He replied that it was better for society to bear the entire burden of supporting such workers and know it, rather than to bear a part of the burden and not know it.

TEAMSTERS RAISE WAGES.

Cheyenne, Wyo., Jan. 12. — The Teamsters' union has signed a union-shop agreement with employers in this city. Wages are increased and hours reduced. A feature of the agreement provides that employers shall "deduct all initiation fees, dues, fines and assessments as turned in by the financial secretary."

Jersey City, N. J., Jan. 12.—Organized milk drivers, affiliated with the Brotherhood of Teamsters, have secured an agreement with the Sheffield Farms company. Wages are increased and working conditions improved.

MEAT CUTTERS ADVANCE.

Los Angeles, Cal., Jan. 12.—Meat Cutters' union No. 265 has raised wages on an average of $3.50 a week and reduced the work day two and one-half hours. This organization is less than six months' old.

Dallas, Tex., Jan. 12.—Butcher and meat cutters of this city have organized and affiliated with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen.

MORE COAL MINED IN 1917.

Washington, Jan. 12. — The 1917 bituminous coal production is put at 544,000,000 tons, an increase of 42,000,000 tons over 1916, in preliminary estimates by the federal geological survey. December's production was the smallest of any month since last April, due principally to car shortage. In the last week of this month the mines were operated at only 88 per cent of their total capacity.

PASS OIL-COAL LEASE BILL.

Washington, Jan. 12.—The senate has passed the oil and coal leasing bill, which has been before that body for four years. Under this bill, which now goes to the house, the secretary of the interior is empowered to lease government land containing coal, phosphate, oil, gas and sodium.

POLICE ON 8-HOUR DAY.

Dallas, Tex., Jan. 12.—The police department of this city has been placed on the eight-hour basis, the police and motor squads being divided into three shifts.

SWITCHMEN UITE.

Buffalo, N. Y., Jan. 12.—Officials of the Switchmen's Union of North America report the formation of locals at Cut Bank, Mont., Leavenworth, Wash., and Enid, Okla.

FOOD COSTS INCREASE.

Washington, Jan. 12.—The federal bureau of labor statistics reports that food costs in October, 1917, were 52 per cent higher than in the same month of 1913. Lard shows the greatest increase, 133 per cent; corn meal with an increase of 124 per cent and flour with an increase of 11[illegible] per cent are next in order.

Food costs increased 30 per cent in the year between October, 1916, and October, 1917. In this period no article shows a decline. Corn meal shows the greatest increase, being twice as high in 1917 as it was in 1916.

The price of food, as a whole, for October 15, 1917, increased 3 per cent over September, 1917. Of the 27 articles for which prices are given, 17 increased in price, 5 decreased, and 5 articles remained the same. Lard shows the greatest increase, or 25 per cent; bacon is 9 per cent higher; milk, 8 per cent; and eggs, 5 per cent. Corn meal declined 15 per cent, flour, 4 per cent, and sugar, 2 per cent.

SOLDIERS FROM COUNTRY DON'T LEAD, PHYSICALLY

Washington, Jan. 12.—The military conscription law disproves the belief that the average of physical soundness is higher among country boys than among the city bred.

For the purpose of comparison, selection was made of a typical set of cities of 40,000 to 500,000 population, with no large immigrant element, and distributed over 10 states, and a corresponding set of counties of the same total size, located in the same states, and containing no city of 30,000 population. The total number of registrants in the two sets of areas was 315,000.

The comparison resulted as follows: Of 35,017 registrants in city areas, 9,909 were rejected. Of 44,462 registrants in rural areas, 12,432 were rejected.

In a statement issued from the provost marshal general's office, this comment is made on these figures:

"In other words, 28.47 per cent of the city boys were rejected, as against 27.96 per cent of the country boys.

"It will be seen that the result is virtually a tie. The country lad, accustomed to hard physical labor, may be more muscular than his city cousin, but he is not superior in the possession of the degree of physical soundness essential to his acceptance as a soldier."

R. R. SHOP MEN STATE CASE.

St. Louis, Mo., Jan. 12.—In the official circular of the A. F. of L. railway employes' department, this comment is made on the operation of railroads under government control:

"Just what bearing government control will have on our methods of doing business with the railroads is somewhat problematical. It is reasonable to assume that it will be necessary for us to prepare to do business on a national basis and that we must also prepare to put the necessary machinery in motion to enable us to meet whomever the government may designate the authority of handling labor questions.

"We can perform no greater service to our country during the war than that of giving the government the best service we are capable of.

"We hear much of the part officials are to play, and the importance of the transportation employes. We do not belittle their importance, but neither shall we overlook the fact that we represent the keystone to the whole structure. Our mechanical skill and training are the most potent factors, and we are going to give of them fully and freely in this great struggle to make democracy safe, and in return we are going to demand fair and just consideration."

WOMEN CAN BE "HANDLED."

Washington, Jan. 12.—In a bulletin issued by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, this "tip" is given low-wage employers, who are first given the hint to howl long and loud that there is a "shortage of labor:"

"Labor shortage is everywhere marked—in mines and the lumber business, in manufacturing and in every phase of distribution. The familiar feature now in this connection is the steady substitution of women for men in all manner of employment. After the initial training they are usually found very faithful in their duties, industrious, and are usually less troublesome than men, even though they do not in all cases possess man's initiative."

CHINESE FOR CUBA.

Havana, Cuba, Jan. 12.—President Menocal has signed an act which permits the importation of Chinese to work on sugar plantations in this island. About 8,000 of these coolies will be shipped from Shanghai via San Francisco. The total transportation cost will approximate $1,000,000. The contract for bringing over the laborers specifies that they must be outfitted, among other things, with a teapot and chopsticks.

PRINTERS RAISE WAGES.

New Haven, Conn., Jan. 12.—Typographical union No. 47 have secured a three-year agreement, which raises wages $2 to $3 a week.

Stockton, Cal., Jan. 12.—The Typographical union has raised wages 50 cents a day. The newspaper work day will be seven hours and 45 minutes until next April, when 15 minutes will be taken off.

U. S. TO SELL NITRATE.

Washington, Jan. 12.—The government will receive 18,000 tons of Chilean nitrate for fertilizer purposes during January, and the balance of the 100,000 tons authorized by congress will be rushed to this country as fast as possible. The nitrate will be sold only to farmers at approximately $75 a ton on board cars at the seaboard. Farmers will have to pay freight and other charges.

WAGE LAW NOT ENFORCED.

Detroit, Mich., Jan. 12.—The Steam Engineers' union complains that members employed by the city are not receiving rates provided under the municipal wage law, passed by a referendum vote.

WILL ADJUST DISPUTES.

Tacoma, Wash., Jan. 12.—Sheet Metal Workers' union No. 150 and employers in this industry have each appointed a committee of five to adjust disputes.